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BY THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Report To The Assistant Secretary Of The Navy For Manpower And Reserve Affairs

Observations On The Navy's Process For Determining Annual Enrollment Requirements

GAO found that the Navy's processes for determining annual enrollment requirements for its skills progression and functional training courses need improvement. Current processes often overstate requirements and result in the inefficient use of Training Command resources, such as instructors. While GAO's work was in progress, the Navy also concluded that its requirements determination processes were inadequate and formulated improvement plans. However, GAO is concerned that unless the improvements are coordinated at a sufficiently high level within the Navy, they will not result in cohesive, workable solutions. GAO is also concerned that improvements in the process for determining requirements for functional training courses are not planned.



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SEPTEMBER 30, 1985

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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

NATIONAL SECURITY AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

B-220095

The Honorable Chase Untermeyer
Assistant Secretary of the Navy
for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

Dear Mr. Untermeyer:

We have completed our survey of the Navy's processes for determining annual training course enrollment requirements. Our preliminary observation is that the processes used for skills progression and functional courses need improvement. A comparison of planned and actual enrollments for these courses showed that they were frequently underutilized. During our survey, the Navy also concluded that improvements were needed and devised a plan for making the improvements for skills progression training. In addition, the Training Command developed a procedure for monitoring utilization in all its courses and questioning the need for those that experience low utilization over a 2-year period.

Because of the Navy's improvement actions, we do not plan to review these issues further at this time. However, we are concerned that unless the improvements are coordinated at a sufficiently high level within the Navy, they will not result in cohesive, workable solutions because the division of responsibility for planning, providing resources to, and conducting Navy training makes dealing with the problems complicated and difficult. We are also concerned that the initiatives will not improve the process for determining functional training requirements.

Most Navy training is conducted in the following three broad areas:

- Initial skills, or class "A" courses, are normally given directly after recruit training to prepare sailors for entry level work in a particular occupation (e.g., an aviation machinist mate).

--Skills progression, or class "C" courses, are given primarily to provide experienced personnel with more specific or advanced knowledge, skills, and techniques (e.g., an aviation machinist mate who maintains the J-57 jet engine).

--Functional, or class "F" courses, generally provide instruction in common tasks, such as firefighting, to teams of Navy personnel.

Skills progression, or class "C" courses, are further divided into those which award Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) codes or occupational subspecialties and those which do not.

During our survey, we focused our efforts on how the Navy computed its training requirements for "C" and "F" courses. Our objectives were to

--determine how the Navy formulated annual student enrollment plans for each of its training courses,

--determine the extent to which actual enrollment approximated planned enrollment for each course, and

--obtain an indication of the likely causes and effects of any substantial underutilization/overutilization of training courses.

We found that two processes were used to plan requirements for "C" and "F" courses. One process is used to project enrollments for courses that award NECs; the other is used to project enrollments for other "C" courses and all "F" courses. In our opinion, both processes need improvement.

The process for forecasting annual student enrollment for courses that award NECs is not well documented and responsibilities are divided among several organizations. Since responsibilities are not documented, they may not be well understood and important knowledge could be lost when personnel rotate. Moreover, the procedures used to prepare the enrollment plans were not adequate.

No standard process exists for forecasting enrollments for other specialized skill and functional training courses. Enrollment plans for these courses are prepared by the individual training activities where the courses are taught. In some cases, we found that the enrollment plan is nothing more than a restatement of the classroom capacity for the course.

At the time of our survey, no organization was systematically monitoring implementation of the student enrollment plans. Monitoring is important to determine if actual attendance

approximates planned enrollments and if training resources are being used efficiently.

As a result of inadequacies in the enrollment planning processes and the Navy's lack of monitoring the implementation of the plans, training resources may have been used inefficiently. We base these observations on the fact that instructor authorizations and course schedules are determined largely by the annual enrollment plans and that the current planning processes tend to overstate enrollment requirements.

When we compared actual and planned attendance in each course for fiscal year 1984, we found that planned attendance exceeded actual attendance by more than 20 percent in almost one-half of the courses. By contrast, actual attendance exceeded planned enrollment by this percentage in only 20 percent of the courses. In 19 percent of the courses, utilization rates had continued at a relatively low level (less than 80 percent) for each of the past 3 fiscal years. Low utilization was most prevalent in skills progression courses.

Although we did not assess the overall adequacy of instructor staffing at Training Command activities, we did identify instances where better planning and monitoring would have resulted in authorizing fewer instructor positions. For example, using the staffing standards and formulas prescribed in the Shore Manpower Document Program, we recomputed instructor requirements for a sample of 15 courses that had low utilization over the past 3 fiscal years and another 33 related courses where these same instructors were used. Our computations showed that the workload in those courses could have been managed with 123 rather than the 182 instructors who were assigned, or a difference of 59 fewer instructors.

Course schedules predicated on overstated enrollment plans also resulted in inefficient use of classrooms, instructors, and equipment. We noted a number of instances in which classes were convened with fewer than the optimum number of students. In some cases, classes were conducted with one or two students.

Since the courses we surveyed were not a random sample, we cannot project these results to other courses experiencing low utilization. However, given the relationship between the annual enrollment plans and the instructor requirement computation formulas, it is logical to assume that instructor requirements may be overstated for other courses where actual attendance is substantially less than planned.

While our work was in progress, personnel in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel, and Training also identified inadequacies in the requirements planning processes for skills progression courses and outlined a

plan of action for addressing the problems. Some of the planned initiatives are to

- develop a model or models for predicting annual skills progression training course requirements;
- evaluate organizational relationships which affect the "C" school planning process;
- study ways to improve the accuracy of data bases, such as billet and personnel inventory files, needed to project training requirements;
- study ways to make the phase-in and phase-out of equipment an integral part of training requirements projections; and
- review current and past course utilization rates to identify possible economies.

Navy officials told us that they estimate that all improvement actions will be completed by the end of 1985.

Appendix I of this report more fully explains the issues we identified, their impact on Navy training resources, and the actions the Navy has taken or plans to take to correct the problems. Appendix II is a more detailed description of our objectives, scope, and methodology.

Although we do not plan to do further work on these issues at this time, we will monitor the Navy's efforts to improve its requirements determination processes. Accordingly, we will periodically request information on the progress made in implementing planned improvements.

While we did not request written agency comments, we did discuss our observations with officials of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel, and Training and with the Chief of Naval Education and Training who agreed with our observations. We would appreciate receiving any comments you may have about the issues discussed in this report.

Sincerely yours,



John Landicho
Senior Associate Director

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON NAVY TRAININGREQUIREMENTS DETERMINATION PROCESSES

This appendix contains our observations on the Navy's processes for determining the number of students needing skills progression and functional training courses. It also contains information about the impacts of inadequacies in the processes and the Navy's actions and plans to correct some of the problems.

PROCESS FOR COMPUTING NEC TRAINING
REQUIREMENTS NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Responsibility for forecasting annual student enrollment for training courses that award Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) codes¹ is divided among various Navy organizations, and there are no guidelines that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each organization. Also, because responsibilities are not documented, they may not be well understood. Moreover, the procedures used to prepare the enrollment plans were not adequate. The Navy has recently recognized the inadequacies in its process and has developed a plan for making improvements.

Planning responsibilities
are divided

The Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel, and Training (OP-01) shares responsibility for determining training requirements with the individual warfare sponsors, such as the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Submarine Warfare. OP-01 has overall responsibility for determining manpower and training requirements for approved and projected force levels. The warfare sponsors, on the other hand, control funding for training, formulate requirements, establish priorities, and develop other training alternatives in their respective areas.

Several organizational elements within OP-01, as well as the training sections in various warfare sponsors' offices, participate in preparing the annual student enrollment plans.

¹NEC codes are used primarily to identify positions that require specialized skills not possessed by most members of a general occupation. These occupational subspecialties are usually in the operation or maintenance of specific equipment and hardware systems.

Specific responsibilities of each organization, however, have not been clearly documented and thus may not be well understood.

The Training Policy and Programs Branch of OP-01 initiates the enrollment planning process by manually computing requirements for each NEC and preparing a draft plan. The plan is then reviewed by the warfare sponsors and the Navy's enlisted community managers who are responsible for monitoring the staffing levels of the various enlisted specialties and subspecialties.

There are no guidelines that set forth the procedures to be used in preparing the draft plan or the criteria to be used by the warfare sponsors and enlisted community managers in reviewing the plan. Officials told us that the major purposes of the warfare sponsors' and enlisted community managers' reviews are to identify changes needed as a result of the phase-in and phase-out of equipment and to identify known trouble areas, such as the inability to fill projected personnel requirements. However, these officials may, in some cases, duplicate work performed by the Training Policy and Programs Branch. An official in one warfare sponsor's office told us, for example, that he recomputes requirements using the same data bases used to prepare the draft plan.

No audit trail was maintained to explain changes made during the review process. Officials told us that the warfare sponsors and the enlisted community managers made numerous, substantive changes to the draft enrollment plan. According to these officials, however, reasons for the changes were not usually documented and may not even be explained verbally. An official in one of the warfare sponsors' offices told us, for example, that he did not provide the Training Policy and Programs Branch any rationale for changing the draft plan. According to this official, the warfare sponsors are in a better position to determine enrollment requirements because of their first-hand knowledge of events in their warfare specialties. If reasons for changes are not explained and documented, planners will not be aware of the circumstances that caused the changes and therefore will not be able to evaluate the need to reflect these circumstances in subsequent enrollment plans.

After enlisted community managers and warfare sponsors complete their reviews, the Training Policy and Programs Branch recompiles the plan and sends it to the Naval Education and Training Command where feasibility studies are performed. Feasibility studies are used to determine if the Training Command can accommodate the planned enrollments within existing resources or to identify if any additional resources, such as instructors and classrooms, are needed to accomplish the plan.

Feasibility study results are returned to the Enlisted Programs Implementation Branch of OP-01. This organization coordinates the results with the warfare sponsors who decide whether to provide the additional resources or to reduce the enrollment plan to a level that can be accommodated within existing resources. The Training Policy and Programs Branch, which originated the enrollment plan, is not involved in this part of the process and cannot take into consideration decisions made in this part of the planning process in preparing future plans.

The finalized enrollment plan is sent to the Chief of Naval Education and Training (CNET). CNET uses the plan to determine class schedules and the number of seats available in each class. If the training involves more than one course or if the course is offered at more than one location, training officials must decide how many seats will be available in each course at each location.

In early 1984, OP-01 compared its NEC training enrollment plan with the number of available seats, as identified by the Training Command, and found that the Training Command was not always accepting the enrollment plan promulgated by OP-01. Apparently, the Training Command had increased the enrollment plan for some courses to provide more seats directly to operational fleet units. Officials told us they did not document the comparison and therefore could not show how extensive the differences were. The discrepancies were significant enough, however, to cause the Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel, and Training to reaffirm that the plan promulgated by OP-01 was the official requirement for NEC training courses.

Because most of the people involved in the requirements determination process occupy military positions that are subject to periodic rotation, it is important that written guidelines clearly set forth specific responsibilities and procedures for preparing the training enrollment plan. In the absence of such guidelines, there is a risk that important knowledge will be lost when personnel rotate.

Procedures for determining requirements are not adequate

All military training is conducted to satisfy the need for personnel with various types and levels of skills to staff an approved or projected force structure. The Department of Defense's Military Manpower Training Report describes the general process to use in determining training requirements.

The starting point for computing training requirements is to determine the number of positions in the force structure that require a particular knowledge, skill, or ability. Requirements

so identified should then be compared with the number of trained personnel forecasted to be on hand in each skill and skill level. This comparison of skill requirements and skill inventory projections establishes the extent of shortages or surpluses likely to exist in each area. The shortages represent training requirements.

The procedures the Navy used to prepare the NEC student enrollment plans did not conform to this model. We found that (1) some planners questioned the accuracy of the data in the current position file and personnel inventory files used to compute training requirements, (2) there was no systematic method of projecting changes in position requirements, and (3) the procedures did not take into account the inventory of personnel already trained in each NEC.

Planners questioned accuracy
of data in files

Planners told us they have questioned the accuracy of data in either the position authorization file or the personnel inventory file used to project training requirements.

An official in the Navy Military Personnel Command told us that his staff had compared authorized positions for two communications security equipment maintenance NECs to a listing of locations where that equipment was known to be installed. The comparison showed that the position file did not accurately reflect the personnel needed to maintain this equipment. The official believes that the inaccuracies are widespread and that the file reflects both too many and too few positions, depending on the NEC.

We did not attempt to evaluate the extent of inaccuracies in the position authorization file. We did note, however, during our visit to two Atlantic Fleet ships that 65 personnel had to be detailed to these ships because the ships' manpower authorization documents, which are included in the data base used to determine training requirements, contained inaccuracies and did not identify all the skills and subspecialties needed aboard these ships. Some of the positions involved the same NECs included in the Naval Military Personnel Command study.

The file showing the number of personnel trained in each NEC was also considered to be inaccurate. A December 1984 Navy study showed that a large number of NECs were not being recorded in personnel records after sailors completed training. This study showed, for example, that the total NEC inventory grew by only 1,000 in the third quarter of fiscal year 1984, even though at least 10,000 personnel had been trained in NEC-awarding courses in each quarter of that fiscal year. The problem is believed to have been caused primarily by out-of-date information in one of the automated systems used to record the awarding of NECs.

No systematic mechanism for
projecting future changes in
positions

The procedures used to prepare recent training enrollment plans did not contain a systematic way of projecting future changes in the positions as a result of the phase-in and phase-out of equipment. This feature is particularly important since training enrollment plans are prepared almost 2 years in advance of training dates. When the plan does not reflect the phase-in or phase-out of equipment during that 2-year period, requirements may be overstated for some NECs and understated for others.

Officials told us that one of the reasons for having the draft enrollment plan validated by enlisted community managers and warfare sponsors was to incorporate their knowledge of the phase-in and phase-out of equipment. Since changes made by these officials are rarely explained, however, the Navy has no assurance that this equipment scheduling is accurately reflected in the enrollment plans.

Planning does not adequately
account for personnel already
trained

The method used to compute enrollment requirements for NEC-awarding courses did not take into account personnel already trained in each NEC. Predicated on the assumption that one-third of the authorized positions will be vacated each year, the methodology establishes a training requirement of at least one-third of the authorized positions. The procedure, therefore, assumes that a person will be trained enroute to fill every vacant position coded with a NEC. Stated another way, the training plans are built on the assumption that personnel previously trained in a NEC will not be assigned to fill another position coded with that NEC. Such a procedure is not in consonance with the Navy's stated goal of making personnel assignments to take optimum advantage of training that has already been given.

According to a Naval Military Personnel Command official, NECs are not the primary determinant in making personnel assignments. However, personnel who make the assignments are required to attempt a match between the NEC coded to a position and the prior training of personnel available to fill the position. The Navy does not have data that shows how frequently personnel previously trained in a NEC are assigned to fill vacant positions requiring that NEC.

Improvement actions

During our survey, the Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel, and Training determined that

improvements were needed in the requirements determination processes. A December 1984 study, prepared for the fiscal year 1987 budget, concluded that the Navy lacked an adequate methodology for determining "C" school training requirements. The study also concluded that the Navy could not determine if growth trends in skills progression training experienced over the past few years would continue or if the appropriate amount of resources had been programmed for this type of training. In addition, the study concluded that the lack of an adequate methodology distorted the relationship between force structure growth and personnel retention on the one hand and training requirements on the other.

In December 1984, the Training Policy and Programs Branch outlined an approach to improve the requirements determination processes for NEC-awarding courses. The major initiatives are to

- develop a model or models for predicting annual skills progression training course requirements;
- evaluate organizational relationships that affect enrollment planning for skills progression courses;
- study ways to improve the accuracy of data bases, such as position and personnel inventory files, needed to project training requirements;
- study ways to make the phase-in and phase-out of equipment an integral part of training requirements projections;
- review current and past course utilization rates to identify possible economies; and
- develop an approach that will permit better management assessment of utilization.

These initiatives are scheduled for completion by December 1985.

STANDARD PROCESSES DO NOT EXIST
FOR DETERMINING OTHER C AND F SCHOOL
TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Enrollment requirements for "C" school courses, which do not result in the award of a NEC, and all functional or "F" school training are computed at the training activities where the courses are taught. The Training Command, however, has not promulgated standard guidance to be used in forecasting enrollments for these courses. As a result, planners do not always involve users in determining enrollment requirements. Further, school officials told us that in some cases, the enrollment plans were nothing more than a restatement of the maximum classroom capacity.

In October 1980, the Naval Audit Service reported that resources available at fleet training activities were being significantly underutilized.² According to the report, planned student enrollments at these training activities had historically been established at levels that exceeded the actual enrollment rates. One of the primary reasons for low utilization rates, according to the report, was that training activities were determining the majority of fleet training requirements (student enrollments) without consulting the fleet as to its actual training needs. Therefore, the Audit Service recommended that the Training Command actively involve fleet commanders in either the determination or the endorsement of planned student enrollments at fleet training activities.

The Chief of Naval Education and Training concurred in the recommendation and promised to publish an instruction regarding the development of a training enrollment plan for courses at fleet training activities and the submission of that plan to the fleet commanders for their concurrence. However, the instruction was not issued. According to one Training Command official, fleet commanders did not wish to be involved in this process because they could not forecast ship deployments and other variables affecting the availability of personnel for training. The Training Command did issue to its subordinate commands a message requesting that they review and update existing enrollment plans through "liaison with the users and with due consideration for past utilization." This guidance, however, was apparently not viewed as a permanent Training Command policy.

We also found indications that processes for planning enrollments to these courses, both at the fleet training activities and at other locations where they are offered, needed improvement. Our computations showed that in over 18 percent of these types of courses, planned enrollments exceeded actual enrollments by more than 20 percent for each of the past 3 years.

We visited several Pacific Fleet training activities and some Naval Technical Training Command activities where these types of courses were taught. Officials at these activities told us that no standard procedures existed for determining annual enrollment requirements. In several cases, they said that the enrollment plans were nothing more than a restatement of the maximum classroom capacity.

²Naval Audit Service Report A41110, Chief of Naval Education and Training, October 17, 1980.

Because requirements for these type of courses cannot be directly related to individual positions, estimating annual student enrollment will no doubt be more difficult than for those courses which award NECs. Nevertheless, enrollment requirements should be related to the specific force structure, and it would appear that the fleet activities, as users of training, would be in a better position to determine requirements than the training agency itself.

Improvement actions

Officials in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel, and Training told us that they were also concerned about the lack of an adequate methodology for determining requirements for those skills progression courses that did not award NECs. They believe that requirements for these courses should be directly related to either the projected force structure (positions) or the amount of each type of equipment deployed in the fleet. Therefore, they intend to apply the planning improvements discussed earlier to these types of courses. For example, the model being developed to project requirements for NEC-awarding courses may also be used to project requirements for at least a portion of the courses that do not award NECs.

No plans have been developed for improving the determination of functional training requirements. The Navy is less concerned with this process since these courses are usually much less technical and shorter in length and, therefore, the link between training resources and student enrollments is much less direct.

INADEQUATE PLANNING AND MONITORING MAY RESULT IN THE INEFFICIENT USE OF TRAINING COMMAND RESOURCES

Weaknesses in the Navy's system of planning training requirements have resulted in overstated enrollment requirements. This, in turn, may have resulted in the inefficient use of Training Command resources since annual enrollment requirements are a major factor in determining and allocating training resources.

Although not sufficient to project the impact of the inadequate requirements determination processes, our survey did show that some Training Command resources were being used inefficiently. We found that because enrollment plans were overstated, more instructors were authorized in some courses than were actually needed. Also, because class schedules were predicated on overstated enrollment plans, some classes were convened with fewer than the optimum number of students.

At the time of our survey, the Navy had not established a criterion for determining what rate of utilization was acceptable

and no Navy organization was systematically monitoring the degree to which enrollment plans were implemented. As a result, the underutilization went undetected for long periods.

Current processes
overstate requirements

Our comparison of the actual and planned enrollments to all training courses for the past 3 fiscal years showed that planning processes overstated requirements more frequently than understating them. Of the training course records we compared for fiscal year 1984, for example, the planned enrollment exceeded the actual attendance by more than 20 percent in almost one-half of the courses while requirements were understated to that same extent in only about 20 percent of the courses.

In many cases, the underutilization had existed for a long period of time. To detect these long-term trends, we calculated utilization rates for currently active courses for the past 3 fiscal years (1982 through 1984). We termed courses that had experienced utilization rates of less than 80 percent for each of these years as systematically and substantially underutilized.

Since the Navy had not established a criterion for what constitutes acceptable utilization, we had to assert one for our comparisons.³ We selected 20 percent because that was the percentage the Training Command and the Naval Audit Service used in their studies. Also, the standard for instructor computations in the Navy's Shore Manpower Document Program is based on the assumption that a 20-percent deviation in class sizes can be accommodated with no adverse impact. We used the 3-year period because that was the longest period for which the Navy Training Command had data.

The following chart shows the results of our comparisons.

<u>Type course</u>	<u>No. of courses</u>	<u>No. under utilized</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>No. over utilized</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Initial skills	316	44	14	15	5
NEC-awarding	1,119	211	19	38	3
Other skills progression	2,274	454	20	78	3
Functional	<u>2,320</u>	<u>407</u>	18	<u>168</u>	7
Total	<u>6,029</u>	<u>1,116</u>	19	<u>299</u>	5

³In April 1985, after we had completed our analysis, the Training Command issued a regulation that defined low utilization as actual enrollment of 70 percent or below of planned enrollment for two consecutive years.

Our comparisons showed that about 19 percent of the training courses had been underutilized in each of the last 3 fiscal years. Our comparisons were based on data contained in the Navy's Integrated Training and Administration System, an automated management information system. Because we did not perform a detailed review, we did not attempt to test the accuracy of the Navy's data in any systematic way. We did, however, obtain some confirmatory information such as the actual number of students attending a small sample of courses in fiscal year 1984 and generally found this data to be accurate.

Underutilization results in inefficiencies

Because many of the Navy's training courses are of relatively short duration and instructors can frequently be used in more than one course, a direct relationship does not exist between the annual enrollment plans and the number of instructors authorized. The enrollment plans are, however, a major factor in the instructor authorization computations--principally because total annual enrollments determine the number of times a course must be given during the year.

We did not assess the overall adequacy of staffing at any of the Training Command activities visited because such an assessment would have been beyond the scope of our work. We did, however, identify instances where more realistic planning would have resulted in authorizing fewer instructor positions.

We recomputed instructor requirements based on actual rather than planned enrollments for a block of 11 training courses at one location and found that the workload could have been accomplished with eight fewer instructors than were assigned. At another location, we recomputed requirements for 15 courses and found that 31 fewer instructors would have been needed if the enrollment plans had approximated the actual student attendance. At a third location, we examined a 15-course grouping and concluded that 19 fewer instructors could have accommodated the actual student enrollments.

In computing the number of instructors actually needed, we used the same formulas the Navy used. The only difference was that we used actual rather than planned numbers of students for each course. Like the Navy, we considered instructor cross-utilization when course master schedules showed it to be a factor.

Manpower auditors from the Naval Technical Training Command subsequently reviewed instructor requirements at one of the locations included in our survey. These auditors also concluded that instructor requirements were overstated in one of the training departments because actual enrollments were significantly lower than planned enrollments. The auditors recommended reducing the instructor authorizations but simultaneously

increased the number of administrative or support positions. The net effect was no change in the total number of positions.

Since we did not perform a total manpower review, we could not determine if additional support positions were justified. There are questions, however, about whether personnel with the right kind of skills are assigned if they are justified for instructor positions and then used in a support role. For example, based on the planned enrollment of 170 students in fiscal year 1984, two instructors were authorized for a course offered at one location we visited. However, only 94 students actually attended the course during that year; even fewer students had attended the two previous years.⁴ Our computation, which showed that only one instructor was needed, was validated by the fact that one of the two instructors was on extended duty as a security guard at the time of our visit.

The Training Command prepares its course schedules based largely on enrollment plans. Since each course offering is constrained by space, equipment, or personnel limitations, these plans help determine the number of times a course will be given each year. Consequently, when enrollment plans are overstated, the Training Command plans for too many course offerings.

We observed that in some cases, this has led to convening classes with fewer than the optimum number of students, which results in the inefficient use of classroom space, training equipment, and instructors. In one 2-week course of instruction, for example, we observed that all 15 of the fiscal year 1984 class convenings had fewer than the maximum number of students. About one-third of the classes convened with fewer than one-half of the optimum number of students and one class had only two students.

Navy not monitoring course utilization rates

Evaluation or monitoring is the way planners and managers learn from their mistakes and improve their performance. However, at the time of our survey, no Navy organization was systematically monitoring and evaluating the implementation of training enrollment plans. As a result, the Navy had no way of ensuring that its training resources were being allocated efficiently.

Officials in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations told us they did not monitor the implementation of enrollment plans. Training Command officials also told us that it was not their responsibility to monitor utilization of NEC-awarding

⁴Only 54 of the 94 students who attended met the grade level criterion established for the course. The other 40 students should not have been admitted.

courses since enrollment requirements for these courses were determined by the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. According to these officials, the Training Command's responsibility is to ensure that adequate resources are in place to accommodate the enrollment plans prepared in Washington, D.C.

The Training Command had issued a regulation that required training activities to monitor utilization of those courses for which the activities have prepared enrollment plans. This regulation required training activities to examine the utilization of each such course at least annually and to request cancellation of courses when low or no usage indicates the need for such action. However, according to an official in the Office of the Chief of Naval Education and Training, no such cancellation requests had ever been received.

In January 1985, the Naval Audit Service reported that 108 "A" school and NEC-awarding "C" school courses had been underutilized over a 2 1/2-year period and only limited analysis of these courses had been conducted.⁵ The Audit Service recommended that the Chief of Naval Education and Training analyze courses having low utilization to determine the cause and whether more efficient use of training resources could be made. The Training Command concurred and stated that it would commence a semiannual review of course utilization using data from both its automated information system and special reports from subordinate commands.

Improvements actions

In April 1985, the Training Command issued a regulation prescribing procedures for review and cancellation of obsolete, inefficient, or underutilized courses. Unlike the prior regulation, the new one applies to all types of courses and it contains positive reporting requirements. Training activities are required to identify courses experiencing low utilization and to report to the Chief of Naval Education and Training by February 15 of each year. The report should contain a description of each course and of resources saved or to be reprogrammed if the course is canceled and a recommended plan of action to either cancel the course or require the course sponsor to revalidate the enrollment requirement.

⁵Naval Audit Service Report A40314, Supply, Personnel, Plant-Property, Financial Management, and Other Selected Functions at the Chief of Naval Education and Training, January 25, 1985.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

Our overall objective was to determine if the Navy's planning processes are adequate to ensure that training enrollment plans reflect the quantity and levels of skills needed to staff the projected force structure and if these levels are realistically achievable. We focused our efforts on how the Navy computed its training requirements for "C" and "F" courses. Our specific objectives were to

- determine how the Navy formulated annual student enrollment plans for each of its courses,
- determine the extent to which actual attendance approximated planned enrollments for each course, and
- obtain an indication of the likely causes and effects of any substantial underutilization/overutilization of individual training courses.

To achieve our objectives, we examined processes for planning skills progression ("C" school) and functional ("F" school) training course enrollments. We reviewed applicable Navy regulations and instructions as well as pertinent internal management studies and Navy audit reports, and we visited Atlantic Fleet ships to discuss training plans and personnel assignments. We also discussed planning processes with officials in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Manpower, Personnel, and Training; the Deputy Chiefs of Naval Operations for Surface Warfare and Air Warfare; the Naval Military Personnel Command; the Chief of Naval Education and Training; the Chief of Naval Technical Training; the Commander of Training Pacific Fleet; and five subordinate training activities.

To determine the extent to which actual attendance approximated planned enrollments and to calculate utilization rates for each course for each year, we obtained a data tape from the Chief of Naval Education and Training. This tape contained information on the planned and actual number of student enrollments in each course for each of the past 3 fiscal years (1982-84). Because our work did not progress beyond the survey phase, we did not, in any systematic way, assess the reliability of data on the tape.

To determine the effects of low course utilization, we selected a sample of 15 courses for more indepth analysis. For these courses, we collected information on the optimum student-

instructor ratios, the number of instructors authorized and on-board, equipment and facilities used in the courses, and individual class sizes. We also collected data on 33 additional courses in which the same instructors were used. We judgmentally selected the courses in our sample to represent air, surface, and submarine curricula as well as "C" and "F" schools.

We performed our survey work in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

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